



King County

Department of Transportation

Communications

KSC-TR-0824

201 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-3856

January 27, 2014

Metropolitan King County Council
516 Third Ave., Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: King County Transit Advisory Commission service reduction

Dear Councilmembers:

We, the members of the King County Transit Advisory Commission, are aware of and are concerned by the financial problems Metro Transit faces in coming years. We have attended public meetings to hear what our friends, neighbors, and other transit riders have to say. We echo what we hear from them: We wish King County and Metro did not have to face a situation such as this, but we are all in this together. We are well aware of the impact involved in a large reduction in service hours. We hope this proposal will not have to be the only option available. It will lead to fuller buses, longer waits, more walking, and less mobility for all people. For riders with mobility issues, these issues are magnified. A full bus may not be able to accommodate another mobility-impaired rider. For those riders, less bus service becomes a personal safety issue. One of our members simply described it as "frustrating."

In our combined decades of transit advocacy, we have never encountered service reductions on this scale, but we see a silver lining. Metro staff have put quite a bit of work into the service reduction plan. We are impressed by the efforts to improve our transit network at this difficult time. As examples, the service gap on MLK Way created by the recent deletion of Route 42 will be filled by a revised Route 106. Revised Route 73 serves a high-ridership corridor and looks to the future, since its route will one day be served by North Link light rail.

Many of us have had the opportunity to listen to our neighbors at public outreach sessions, and several of us have previously served on neighborhood sounding boards. We have done a lot of listening, and we know Metro staff have as well. Some of Metro's past service change proposals have been improved after input from the public. On the other hand, we have also seen fair proposals changed to satisfy a protest from a small well-organized constituency. We are happy when Metro can adapt to public comment, but now is not the time for politics to play a role. This is too serious, and the pain is being spread all over King County. One of our roles at the Transit Advisory Commission is to help give voices to the underrepresented, such as minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited fluency in English. We would be disappointed if Council allowed the concerns of a vocal few to harm the good of the many.

We remind Council that the metrics and guidelines were created by the Regional Transit Task Force, and that they passed Council unanimously. You have the political cover to do the right thing. We hope every funding resource within county purview is explored, and we urge you to adopt these proposals with a minimum of modification. As more money becomes available for transit, some of these changes will help to build the Metro of the future.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Transit Advisory Commission

cc: The Honorable Dow Constantine, King County Executive
King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Michael Woywod, Chief of Staff

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Joe Woods, Deputy Chief Of Staff, King County Executive Office (KCEO)

John Resha, Senior Legislative Analyst, King County Council

Harold S. Taniguchi, Director, Department of Transportation (DOT)

Kevin Desmond, General Manager, Metro Transit Division, DOT

Victor Obeso, Service Development Manager, Metro Transit Division, DOT

Christina O'Claire, Supervisor, Metro Transit Division, DOT

Marty Minkoff, Supervisor, Metro Transit Division, DOT

Betty Gulledge-Bennett, Communications Manager, DOT